

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6896

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BUENOS AIRES 5663

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, AR

SUBJECT: GOA'S RELATIONS WITH MAJOR POLITICAL PARTIES

REF: BUENOS AIRES 5637

1. FACT THAT ON AUG 24 INTERIOR MIN HARGUINDEGUY RECEIVED THREE POLITICAL PARTY LEADERS--DEOLINDO BITTEL AND TORCUATO FINO OF PERONISTS AND FRANCISCO MANRIQUE OF FEDERALISTS--EXCITED SPECULATION IN SOME CIRCLES THAT GOVT WAS ON VERGE OF "AN OPENING TO THE POLITICAL PARTIES." THAT HARGUINDEGUY RECEIVED BITTEL AT ALL (WHO, WITH MRS. PERON OUT OF ACTION, IS THE ACTING PRESIDENT OF THE PERONIST PARTY) EXCITED MORE THAN SPECULATION AMONG SOME OF HIS BROTHER OFFICERS. A NUMBER OF HARDLINERS REPORTEDLY WERE FURIOUS.

2. SOURCES IN OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENCY HAVE DENIED TO EMBOFFS THAT POLITICAL OPENING IS AROUND THE CORNER. HARGUINDEGUY'S CONVERSATIONS WITH THREE POLITICIANS HAD TO DO WITH SPECIFIC ISSUES AND NOT "POLITICAL OPENINGS", ACCORDING TO SOURCES. THEY INDICATE GOVT IS STILL PLACING NO DEFINITE TIME FRAME ON RESUMPTION OF POLITICAL ACTIVITY OR ELECTIONS. THAT WILL COME WHEN MILITARY BELIEVE CONDITIONS ARE PROPITIOUS, BUT THAT IS NOT LIKELY TO BE FOR A LONG WHILE YET--SEVERAL YEARS IN ANY CASE. MEANWHILE, SAME SOURCE SAYS, GOVT WOULD

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BE INTERESTED IN REGULAR TALKS OR CONSULTATIONS WITH THE

MAJOR PARTIES. WITH UCR THERE SHOULD BE NO PROBLEM IN WORKING THIS OUT. BALBIN IS CLEARLY ITS LEADER AND SPOKESMAN. IN CASE OF PERONISM, HOWEVER, GOVT UNCERTAIN TO WHOM IT SHOULD ADDRESS ITSELF. IT HAD THOUGHT EX-INTERIOR MIN ROBLEDO (WHO, ALONG WITH EX-SENATOR LUDER AND EX-FOREIGN MIN ARAUZ CASTEX, REPRESENTS ONE NUCLEUS WITHIN PERONIST MOVEMENT) MIGHT BE INDICATED SPOKESMAN, BUT ARE NOW CONVINCED HE HAS INSUFFICIENT BACKING. SOURCES INDICATE THEY EQUALLY UNCERTAIN HOW MUCH BACKING BITTEL HAS WITHIN PERONIST MOVEMENT OR WHERE HE STANDS IN THE POLITICAL EQUATION. (#-4&78,\$3&76'S CONVERSATION WITH BITTEL, DESPITE THE DISCLAIMERS MENTIONED ABOVE,MAY HAVE HAD SECONDARY OBJECTIVE OF GETTING SOME FEEL FOR THE MAN AND HIS POSITION.)

3. PERONISTS WITH WHOM EMBASSY IS IN CONTACT ARE AWARE OF NEED TO PRESENT MORE UNITED FRON IF THEY ARE TO HAVE ANY SUCCESS IN DEALING WITH GOVT, BUT THAT MAY BE BEYOND THEIR CAPABILITIES FOR THE MOMENT. BITTEL-ROCAMORA-OSELLA MUNOZ GROUP SEEMS TO BE COALESCING AND IS IN CLOSE CONTACT WITH UCR (BITTEL HAD DINNER WITH BALBIN EVENING OF AUG 25), BUT SO FAR REFUSES TO HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH ROBLEDO-LUDER-ARAUZ CASTEX GROUP. AND THERE ARE STILL OTHER NUCLEI WHICH DENY ALLEGIANCE TO EITHER OF THE TWO. PERONISM CONTINUES TO BE MOVEMENT WITHOUT A HEAD.

4. PERONISTS AT LEAST KNOW THEY ARE IN NO CONDITION TO EVEN THINK ABOUT ELECTIONS FOR THE TIME BEING--GIVEN FRAGMENTED STATE OF MOVEMENT. THEY, AND EVEN MORE SO RADICALES, HOWEVER, DO GENERALLY TEND TO BELIEVE THAT PRESSURES FOR RESUMPTION OF POLITICAL ACTIVITY WILL BUILD UP SOONER THAN GOVT BELIEVES ANDTHAT AS VIDELA'S PROBLEMS INCREASE HE WILL REALIZE THAT HE NEEDS COOPERATION OF MAJOR PARTIES IF HE IS TO GOVERN EFFECTIVELY. AT THAT POINT, THEY HOPE TO SEE GOVT BEGIN TO LOOK FOR SOME KIND OF "SALIDA". INTERESTINGLY, SEVERAL PERONISTS AND RADICALES HAVE RAISED POSSIBILITY THAT THIS MIGHT TAKE FORM OF ELECTIONS IN WHICH THEIR TWO PARTIES WOULD SUPPORT MILITARY CANDIDATE FOR PRESIDENCY. MEANWHILE, PERONIST AND UCR LEADERS ALMOST WITHOUT EXCEPTION, WHILE DISTURBED OVER SOME OF THE DIRECTIONS THE GOVT HAS TAKEN SINCE MARCH 24 CONTINUE TO SEE IN VIDELA AND VIOLA THE BEST HOPE FOR AN EVENTUAL RETURN TO MODERATION AND DEMOCRATIC PROCESSES (SEE REFTEL).

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